



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

DATE: December 28, 2004

SUBJECT: "Best Practices Awards"

TO: School Food Authority Administrators

FROM: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is pleased to announce the 2005 "Best Practices Awards" in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). In order to encourage and reward outstanding practices in school food service, the Department will recognize outstanding practices in four categories in schools and School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP and/or SBP.

The four categories include:

1. Reaching Needy Children in the Summer
2. Increasing School Breakfast Program Access
3. Increasing Consumption of Fruits/Vegetables and/or Whole Grains by Participants
4. Healthy School Nutrition Environment.

Each of these categories is important to a healthy school environment and has an impact on nutrition and physical activity. Please review the categories on Attachment 1.

School Nutrition Programs encourages you to nominate schools and SFAs for outstanding and innovative practices in any of these areas. The USDA will present awards to a winner in each category.

"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."

A nomination should consist of:

- a complete and accurate description of the practice (at least 250 but not to exceed 300 words);
- appropriate numbers, such as dollars saved or increased participation;
- relevant history, impact, and/or cost effectiveness;
- documenting photographs or newspaper articles;
- one copy of any coloring books, posters or videos that have been developed;
- the name and telephone number of a contact person (printed or typed to alleviate any question of spelling);
- the mailing address;
- the size or average daily participation of school or SFA; and
- the category for the nomination.

The School Food Authority/School Nomination Form is provided as Attachment 2.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN OUR OFFICE BY MARCH 15, 2005.

Attachments

BEST PRACTICES AWARDS CATEGORIES

Ideas are given for each category, however, these ideas are not intended as limitations. Nominations of creative or innovative ideas in all areas are encouraged. The four categories are:

Reaching Needy Children in the Summer - School Food Authorities that expand school lunch or breakfast service under the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs during the summer months or who sponsor or vend summer feeding programs under the Summer Food Service Program to reach needy children. Nominated School Food Authorities should receive credit for all free or reduced price meals served to needy children under the National School Lunch Program and all meals served in the Summer Food Service Program. Provide the number of eligible meals served in June, July, and August, 2004 by meal type; i.e., breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Activities can include use and promotion of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign as well as use of Team Nutrition resources and materials.

Increasing School Breakfast Program Access - Activities and/or other creative or innovative ideas that were developed to promote the School Breakfast Program, increase participation in an existing school breakfast program or to establish a new breakfast program in a nonparticipating site(s). Identify barriers to participation and how they were eliminated. Note any partnerships that were developed within the community to collaborate on ways to improve the breakfast program participation or to start new breakfast programs. Include activities to promote School Breakfast Week. Include enrollment and participation figures and percent of increase and/or the number of new programs established. Activities can include use and promotion of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign as well as use of Team Nutrition resources and materials.

Increasing the Consumption of Fruits/Vegetables and/or Whole Grains by Participants - Develop best practices for increasing fruit (both fresh and dried), fresh vegetable and/or whole grain consumption. Develop partnerships with health programs like 5-A-Day whose goal is to increase the average consumption of fruits and vegetables to five or more servings daily through activities and special events. Can also make efforts to procure and promote use of whole grains and whole grain products in school meals. Note any impact on eating behaviors, like snack choices and increased participation in the school meal programs. Activities can include use and promotion of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign as well as use of Team Nutrition resources and materials.

Healthy School Nutrition Environment - There are six components of a healthy school nutrition environment. Each one is important and has an impact on nutrition and physical activity. The definitions of success, suggested activities, and how tos for making improvements are listed in the Guide to Local Action booklet in the Changing the Scene Kit. Activities can include use and promotion of the “Eat Hard. Play Smart.” campaign as well as use of Team Nutrition resources and materials. There are no limits to the number of components you may select. The components are:

- ✓ A Commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity
- ✓ Quality School Meals
- ✓ Other Healthy Food Choices
- ✓ Pleasant Eating Experiences
- ✓ Nutrition Education
- ✓ Marketing

NOMINATION FORM

Best Practices Award
U.S. Department of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Service

Name of School or School Food Authority (i.e. Sponsor) being nominated (no individuals, please):

Mailing Address: _____

Average Daily Participation: _____ Number of Schools: _____

Category (*check only one*):

- ☐ Reaching Needy Children in the Summer
- ☐ Increasing School Breakfast Program Access
- ☐ Increasing Fruit/Vegetable and/or Whole Grains Consumption
- ☐ Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Submitted by (Type or Print Name/Title): _____

Phone Number _____ Fax Number _____

Mailing Address (*if different than school being nominated*): _____

Description of Practice (*Include information on cost, history, and impact. Supporting documents or additional pages may be attached*)

BEST PRACTICES AWARDS CRITERIA

1. Evidence of sustained excellence (20 points)

Consideration should be given to overall management of the program. Schools and school food authorities that have run a superior program for some length of time should receive the highest score.

2. Innovation (20 points)

An idea that gives a new and effective twist to an old solution or that is an innovative and successful addition to school food service should be rated accordingly. Creative and clever ideas should receive maximum ratings.

3. Impact (20 points)

Evidence of increased participation or increased support or recognition from students, parents, teachers, or the community.

4. Cost effectiveness and efficiency (20 points)

The idea should make good use of the available resources and labor. An expensive new computer system that makes a major improvement in efficiency could be cost effective if the expenditure is in proportion to the results. Manpower and budgetary requirements should be reasonable in relation to the results.

5. Use of “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign material (5 points)
Use of Team Nutrition material (5 points)

6. Transferability (10 points)

Awards should establish standards of excellence for other States to strive toward. Some judgment should be made as to how easily the idea could be implemented by other schools or SFAs.

7. Presentation (10 points)

The material should be well presented. It should be well organized, complete, clear and succinct. Although well-written material may be rated highly, objective measures of success, results, and such items as photographs or letters of support from appropriate users, i.e., students, PTA member or teachers should also be considered as part of the presentation.